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Bard

= = = = =

Where is the dark seat where all the crows
flock around someone seated
in the likeness of a man?

I have heard them calling far away from there
and seen them hurrying on business back
to this ordinary sacred place my lawn

available to sky – just last night
a gauzy all-but-full pale moonrise
discovered it. But no crows.

They leave me nights to wonder in.

14 November 2005

= = = = =

The poem breaks in pieces where the painting does
cause mimicry is common in the beast-souled world
–adults talk childhood eternal shimmer
bad words and special words – imitate
until you learn to walk, then teach running –
how fools who be? – because I was looking
at some illustrator imitating Hundertwasser
imitating Klimt my words broke into dull or
glitter fragments I quietly swept embarrassed
together into other words – these – that look
at first sight as if they make sense, see?

14 November 2005

ARISTON

1.

Wind waver
over the dawn breakers
in Yuca towns
a splintered island post typhoon.
Be there with me –
I too am weatherly divided
I too have a house
all down around my ankles
I too need an arm
around my hours –
how be so fussy with your skin
when everyone has one?

2.

Something counts extra. An elder
ancestress slicing a tomato –
who knew such fruit were known in Thule?

But runes knew everything.
They know brick and seas
thick with herring, wedge-
headed elm sticks to gouge
weird alphabets in Babylon.

We dome from mud. No.
We come from water and it found
its way to earth. From heaven
water came (as it still comes)
but then all suddenly
the seas were all at once.

3.

Why water is said to be the best
it is the highest, and a ball of water
fell from heaven and was earth
with all life in it, Anaximander said,
and here and there grew thick
and stopped being perfect fluid
and was land. Moored to the bare
rock round the hidden fire
we call earth's Core, a Latin word
that means the heart.

14 November 2005

= = = = =

Overheard in a French soap: "This
is my favorite rose, the *Sissi*," I looked
up quickly, I think the rose I saw
was fleshy pink, pink as the Empress
Elisabeth I imagine it was named for
a hundred years ago, the pretty poet
some assassin stabbed. The thorn
I suppose of that lush history
of which she was the flower. Austria.
Supposing, imagining, naming.
What else are we good for, lifting
dangerous flowers and smiling,
offering to people we think we love.

14 November 2005

= = = = =

Full moon and rain, the leaves all down, the light is amber and cool though not cold. A shiver runs through it to find me – one of those days when you feel the chill most vividly when you step back into the warm house.

There – that is a whole life,
an alchemy,
a new state in the union.

All the pronouns are safe in bed
stirring in their sleep the way they do
dreaming they turn into each other

and they do. Out here it's strong and clean,
not a me for miles.

15 November 2005

EDDA TOLD ME

*Ein sat hón úti,
þá er inn aldni kom*

*Lone sat she outside
then the old one came*

--Voluspa, 28

You sat outside to listen
the church forbade it
you sat outside in the night
just listening

and let the night speak—
this was magic, and anyone who sat

quiet in the dark was listening
and anyone who heard

was *volva*, wisewoman,
the heart hearing

the heart knowing how
later to speak.

2.

hearing the night

speaking the night

later the hearing

what if speaking

comes before hearing

what if the dark

comes before night?

3.

there might be a weather

but what does she hear?

15 November 2005

= = = = =

Find a word to answer

or bleed

what we mean

the twitch of a thought is marvelous

a new fire spilled out of an old bone

how things are running for a time and a time

and then they forget to move

as if the moon went out without her mirror

and the night couldn't find its way home.

15 November 2005

= = = = =

At last to me let
the astromeria from Stop-n-Shop
pretend a fragrant freesia
I can't smell, blame mé,
blame a cold I don't have,
it has the look of a lovely smell
sensuous and close not like incense
wafting through a basilica but
the warm smell of a clean body
you sense a moment a moment
when a sweater's pulled off and let fall.

16 November 2005

= = = = =

Cool arrests
or morning weather
what a light would be like
if there were no dark

a match
flaming in the noonday sun

things left.
things thoroughly things,
things reading Wittgenstein
things piled up on a train
beside a traveler
who watches a stone church
arrive and depart

steeple index finger admonition sky

and a slate roof.
Always ready (someone) to understand me
carnelian cufflink

potato fields of Presque-isle
in early winter
I was not there, I do not have to remember

it is all around me
even as I speak
as I fail to speak
as I sleep, a cuff
dangling loose.

16 November 2005

= = = = =

Near to light
the words seem clear
but mean no more
than they do in the dark

*

Think on it, citizens,
the sea could hold all of us
and not overflow. But we,
what are we for?

What is our function
in the dark design?

16 November 2005

Rhinebeck

=====

And when we're gone
what will they say of us?
A street with no houses.
A bird with no sky.

16 XI 05

COOLIDGE CORNER

Could it be obedient to time
the way a beet is to gravity
pressure shapes it, earth shapes it,

on Thanksgiving Day agnostic
Brookline matrons will
walk in the snow mixed rain

still going to the movies
old fashioned as it is to
see anything, to go.

They don't believe
in the clothes they wear,
in the movie they will see.

What shapes anyhow
the way they walk?
The way we see?

17 November 2005

= = = = =

for Carl Thayler

How can there be dead

and then the years that
know say a man, a man who
they say is dead now
a man who

this and that, all the crack
and consequence
heroin of what he said he said
so many working years
working working years
so many times made love
to doesn't matter how many
and they all count, all the times
in Paris hotel a Duluth playground
doesn't matter, doesn't matter
that we whoever we
thought we were being
didn't say what mattered

all the things he did mount up
one shape among myriads but a shape
ascending before anyone who lives

as we do all ascend

then how suddenly today a word comes

saying such a one is dead?

17 November 2005

= = = = =

The captain's chairs
set out on the Elmendorph lawn
\$85 dollars for four: a tuneless

opportunity. How red the roof
on the yellow house across the way.
And David O. Selznick quivering
leaf shadows on the clean walls,

the actresses of my past appear,
Jennifer, Veronica,
a wafture of virtual womanliness

cloud through the oak tree
still holding its dead leaves.

17 November 2005

Red Hook

=====

Taste of water

reminds me

water is a mineral

lapis potabilis

and we must drink it.

We must pay our debt

to the stone kingdom.

17 November 2005

= = = = =

In this town people
wait around for time---
time isn't just something
lying around, time
isn't always there.
You wait for it
the way you wait for the mailman
or the chocolate brown trucks
of UPS to come.
It is no time now.
The angry-faced woman
with the Peace sign on her car
drives away, a swoop of noise
out of the drugstore parking lot
fast into her lane but
she still is waiting.
Time hasn't happened yet here.
We're waiting for the waiting
to begin. Leaf mulch
under the sidewalk trees.
Ginkgo I think. There is no time.

17 November 2005, Rhinebeck

= = = = =

We all have trouble hearing
but most of us don't have trouble hearing words.
But there is always something left to be said
behind what is said
and how to hear that is hard.
Hard of hearing.
So at the seaside you read an English mystery
set on the seaside and when you get to the end
you find the last chapter is missing. Now
you'll never know. But you know
the criminal must really be the sea.

17 November 2005